

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A computer-implemented method of generating a message for a first
2 intellectual property case, the method comprising:
3 storing information related to a plurality of intellectual property cases on a
4 computer-readable medium, the plurality of intellectual property cases including the first
5 intellectual property case;
6 receiving a signal indicating occurrence of an event related to the first
7 intellectual property case;
8 responsive to receiving the signal, identifying one or more rules associated
9 with the event;
10 identifying at least a first rule from the one or more rules based upon filter
11 criteria information associated with the one or more rules and based upon information related
12 to the first intellectual property case stored on the computer-readable medium;
13 generating at least one message using the at least first rule, the message
14 identifying an action to be performed in response to the event and identifying a date
15 associated with the action; and
16 communicating the at least one message to a first designated client system.
17
18 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the plurality of intellectual property
19 cases includes patent cases and the first intellectual property case is a patent application case.
20
21 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the plurality of intellectual property
22 cases includes trademark cases and copyright cases.
23
24 4. The method of claim 1 wherein storing information related to the
25 plurality of intellectual property cases on the computer-readable medium comprises:
26 for each intellectual property case, storing the information related to the
27 intellectual property case in a case data unit, wherein the case data unit stores data related to
28 the intellectual property case and one or more documents related to the intellectual property
29 case.
30
31 5. The method of claim 1 wherein the signal indicating occurrence of the
32 event related to the first intellectual property case is generated responsive to a change in the
33 information related to the first intellectual property case.

1 6. The method of claim 1 wherein identifying the at least first rule from
2 the one or more rules based upon the filter criteria information comprises:

3 determining a set of rules from the one or more rules associated with the
4 event, wherein a rule from the one or more rules is included in the set of rules if the filter
5 criteria associated with the rule is satisfied by the information related to the first intellectual
6 property case, the set of rules including the at least first rule.

1 7. The method of claim 6 wherein:

2 the plurality of intellectual property cases includes patent cases and the first
3 intellectual property case is a patent application case; and

4 the filter criteria associated with each rule in the one or more rules comprises a
5 criterion related to filing status of a patent case, a criterion related to a type of the patent case,
6 and a criterion related to priority information for a patent case.

1 8. The method of claim 1 wherein generating the at least one message
2 using the at least first rule comprises:

3 determining an action associated with the at least first rule;

4 determining a date generation formula associated with the action and a base
5 date used by the date generation formula;

6 applying the date generation formula to the base date to generate the date
7 associated with the action; and

8 including information indicating the action associated with the at least first
9 rule and the date generated by applying the date generation formula in the at least one
10 message.

1 9. The method of claim 1 wherein communicating the at least one
2 message to the first designated client system comprises:

3 determining one or more users associated with the first intellectual property
4 case from information related to the first intellectual property case;

5 from the one or more users, determining a first user who is designated to
6 receive the at least one message generated using the first rule;

7 communicating the at least one message to a system used by the first user.

1 10. The method of claim 9 wherein communicating the at least one
2 message to the system used by the first user comprises:

3 sending an electronic mail message to first user, the electronic mail message
4 including the at least one message.

1 11. A system for generating a message for a first intellectual property case,
2 the method comprising:

3 a processor; and

4 a memory coupled to the processor, the memory configured to store:

5 information related to a plurality of intellectual property cases, the
6 plurality of intellectual property cases including the first intellectual property case; and

7 a computer program;

8 wherein the processor is operative with the computer program to:

9 receive a signal indicating occurrence of an event related to the first
10 intellectual property case;

11 identify one or more rules associated with the event responsive to
12 receiving the signal;

13 identify at least a first rule from the one or more rules based upon filter
14 criteria information associated with the one or more rules and based upon information related
15 to the first intellectual property case stored in the memory;

16 generate at least one message using the at least first rule, the message
17 identifying an action to be performed in response to the event and identifying a date
18 associated with the action; and

19 communicate the at least one message to a first designated client
20 system.

1 12. The system of claim 11 wherein:

2 the plurality of intellectual property cases includes patent cases and the first
3 intellectual property case is a patent application case; and

4 for each intellectual property case, the information related to the intellectual
5 property case is stored in a case data unit, wherein the case data unit stores data related to the
6 intellectual property case and one or more documents related to the intellectual property case.

1 13. The system of claim 11 wherein:

2 the plurality of intellectual property cases includes patent cases and the first
3 intellectual property case is a patent application case; and

the processor is operative with the computer program to determine a set of rules from the one or more rules associated with the event, wherein a rule from the one or more rules is included in the set of rules if the filter criteria associated with the rule is satisfied by the information related to the first intellectual property case, the set of rules including the at least first rule.

14. The system of claim 11 wherein the processor is operative with the computer program to:

- determine an action associated with the at least first rule;
- determine a date generation formula associated with the action and a base date used by the date generation formula;
- apply the date generation formula to the base date to generate the date associated with the action; and
- include information indicating the action associated with the at least first rule and the date generated by applying the date generation formula in the at least one message.

15. The system of claim 11 wherein the processor is operative with the computer program to:

- determine one or more users associated with the first intellectual property case from information related to the first intellectual property case;
- from the one or more users, determine a first user who is designated to receive the at least one message generated using the first rule;
- communicating the at least one message to a system used by the first user.

16. A docketing system comprising:

- a storage module, the storage module configured to store information related to a plurality of intellectual property cases on a computer-readable medium, the plurality of intellectual property cases including the first intellectual property case, the information related to each intellectual property case in the plurality of intellectual property cases including data related to the intellectual property case and data related to one or more documents related to the intellectual property case;
- a processing module, the processing module configured to:
 - receive a signal indicating occurrence of an event related to the first intellectual property case;
 - identify one or more rules associated with the event;

12 identify at least a first rule from the one or more rules based upon filter
13 criteria information associated with the one or more rules and based upon information related
14 to the first intellectual property case stored on the computer-readable medium; and
15 generate at least one message using the at least first rule, the message
16 identifying an action to be performed in response to the event and identifying a date
17 associated with the action; and
18 a communications module configured to communicate the at least one
19 message to a first designated client system.

1 17. A computer program stored on a computer-readable storage medium
2 for generating a message for a first intellectual property case, the computer program product
3 comprising:

4 code for storing information related to a plurality of intellectual property cases
5 on a computer-readable medium, the plurality of intellectual property cases including the first
6 intellectual property case;

7 code for receiving a signal indicating occurrence of an event related to the first
8 intellectual property case;

9 code for identifying one or more rules associated with the event;

10 code for identifying at least a first rule from the one or more rules based upon
11 filter criteria information associated with the one or more rules and based upon information
12 related to the first intellectual property case stored on the computer-readable medium;

13 code for generating at least one message using the at least first rule, the
14 message identifying an action to be performed in response to the event and identifying a date
15 associated with the action; and

16 code for communicating the at least one message to a first designated client
17 system.

1 18. The computer program product of claim 17 wherein the code for
2 identifying the at least first rule from the one or more rules based upon the filter criteria
3 information comprises:

4 code for determining a set of rules from the one or more rules associated with
5 the event, wherein a rule from the one or more rules is included in the set of rules if the filter
6 criteria associated with the rule is satisfied by the information related to the first intellectual
7 property case, the set of rules including the at least first rule.

1 19. The computer program product of claim 17 wherein the code for
2 generating the at least one message using the at least first rule comprises:
3 code for determining an action associated with the at least first rule;
4 code for determining a date generation formula associated with the action and
5 a base date used by the date generation formula;
6 code for applying the date generation formula to the base date to generate the
7 date associated with the action; and
8 code for including information indicating the action associated with the at
9 least first rule and the date generated by applying the date generation formula in the at least
10 one message.

1 20. The computer program product of claim 17 wherein the code for
2 communicating the at least one message to the first designated client system comprises:
3 code for determining one or more users associated with the first intellectual
4 property case from information related to the first intellectual property case;
5 code for determining a first user from the one or more users who is designated
6 to receive the at least one message generated using the first rule; and
7 code for communicating the at least one message to a system used by the first
8 user.